

Race and Equity Pocket Questions

Title and purpose of this initiative: Legislative Public Hearing for Conditional Zoning at 1307 West Main Street. The Town has received a petition to amend the zoning classification for the property at 1307 West Main Street from B-3 to R-2-CZ for the development of a five-story multi-family residential project. The application includes a request for a text amendment to increase the maximum building height in the R-2 district from 50 feet to 65 feet. A draft ordinance for the requested map amendment has been prepared. The Town Council must receive public input before reaching a decision on this request.

Department: Planning

What are the racial and equity impacts?

The subject property is located within Tract 107.07 which is Carrboro's only QRT for calendar year 2024, and includes approximately 60% white alone, 30% non-white alone, and 10% multiple races (91% of those that indicated multiple races listed white as one of the races. If approved, the map amendment would allow a new development with considerably more residential density that currently permitted in the B-3 district. The applicants have committed to 6 affordable units based on the current design with 34 units anticipated. The number of affordable units may increase if the design program changes and includes more units overall. The location is accessible to existing transit stops and walkable to the downtown area and commercial destinations. The proposal would introduce the beginning of a rather substantial change in character for the west end of Main Street which currently consists, mainly, of older one and two story homes.

Who is or will experience community burden?

The map amendment alone will not add burden to residents in the area but will allow for denser development. Construction would inconvenience residents in Berkshire Manor with noise, dust, etc. and may impact the direct access to West Main Street at certain times, details to be discussed and examined during the development of a construction management plan as part of the SUP-A. It is unclear whether residents at Berkshire Manor or other community members have ever used the site as open space or for casual recreation activities. Nearby residents may see increased traffic, increased stormwater flows, and long-term, increased property values could result in increased property taxes (this could affect housing ownership turnover, and for rentals, this cost is often passed down to renters, increasing tenants' cost of living). If the proposed development does not provide affordable housing, low-income community members may continue to be burdened by the rising cost of home ownership and tenancy in Carrboro.

Who is or will experience community benefit?

Approval of the map amendment would increase the density of the site. The current zoning allows 6 to 10 dwelling units (depending on the use of the affordable density bonus). The proposal, if approved, would allow for 25 to 40 dwelling units comprised of a combination of 1 bedroom, 2 bedroom and 3 bedroom units; at least 6 units would need to be affordable. Town residents stand to benefit from greater density, which would allow Carrboro to increase the diversity of its housing stock and provide homes for new and existing residents close to parks and schools. Existing neighbors could see an increase in property values from the development as well.

What are the root causes of inequity?

Root causes of inequity can be related to past governmental actions like land use planning, transportation planning and discriminatory lending practices that have disproportionately harmed the interests of historically Black communities/communities. On a national scale, the status quo investment in single family zoning has contributed to disparities in wealth, resource accessibility, and quality of living along racial lines. While the Town does not have single family zoning districts and has offered mixed use zoning and diverse housing options for over sixty years, continuing to create diverse housing is one strategy to mitigate larger racial and economic inequities that new or existing residents face due to structural and institutional racism.



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What might be the unintended consequences of this action or strategy?

Rezoning can affect land values and quality of life experiences for surrounding property owners and occupants in ways that can be beneficial and, albeit for some, less desirable. Increasing density to provide more housing and more diverse housing price points would be an example. The public hearing process is intended to provide a way for adjacent property owners and the community at large to learn about a development proposal and provide input in a public hearing. Even with rigorous notification efforts including mailed notice, some people may not learn of a project in time to provide input and/or feel that they understand the project and/or approval process enough to fully participate.

How is your department planning to mitigate any burdens, inequities, and unintended consequences?

The text amendment associated with the rezoning request includes a development standard for the applicant to demonstrate to what extent the new building may cast a shadow on existing buildings on adjacent lots. While not addressing all impacts, it provides a reminder to the applicant and the Town during the review process of the effect of constructing bigger/taller buildings on undeveloped and/or infill lots. Suggestions outlined in the REAL lens assessment, moreover, include options for better public engagement moving forward. Of note, this would involve efforts to go beyond what is required by state statute and the Land Use Ordinance.